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ON TWO OLD PLAYS

Old Custome.—In an “inventory of effects” belonging to the Earl of Warwick, 1545–50, was listed a copy of “a play called Old Custome” (*Hist. MSS. Com.*, II, 102). Recently Professor Feuillerat has published (*Mod. Lang. Rev.*, IX, 94 ff.) from a book of the Revels Office (Loseley MS, 17) what he considers a memorandum of a play to be given at court about 1545–47. The dramatis personae included in the memorandum make it clear, I think, that the play was *Old Custome*, in print about this time. In one column are given the types represented in the characters; in another, inclosed in a single set of large brackets, the names of the personages. The list is as follows: “scoler, vertue zele; gent², Insolens diligens; preste, Old blynd Custom; prentes of London, Hunger of Knowledge; Colyer, Thomas of Croydon.” Professor Feuillerat concludes that one scholar and two gentlemen were represented. Diligens, however, might well be the name of Insolens posing as a virtuous character, a situation frequent in the moralities, while Vertue and Zele indicate two different virtuous characters. The play must have prompted the title of *New Custom*, commonly assigned to the reign of Edward VI, and was probably a forerunner of the numerous collier plays.

A Fig for a Spaniard.—In the preface to *The Spaniards Monarchie, and Leagvers Olygarchie* “by Signor Vasco Figveiro . . . Englished by H. O.,” 1592, is the statement, “albeit it hath no title fetched from the Bull within bishopsgate, as a figge for a Spaniard, yet doth it discouer so succinctly and briefly, a Spanish imitatiō of Machiauellized axioms that what other volumes at large, this in a leafe doth plainely demonstrate” (Brydges, *British Bibliographer*, II, 431). Henslowe records the payment of three pounds “at the apoyntment of E Alleyn the 6 of Janewary 1601 [1/2] in parte payment of a Boocke called the spaneshe fygge.” This entry very probably concerns either the old play mentioned in *The Spaniards Monarchie* or a revision of it. Fleay identifies *The spaneshe fygge* with *The Noble Spanish Soldier*, printed in 1634 (*Drama*, I, 128), and Greg is inclined to agree with him (*Henslowe's Diary*, II, 220). Is *The Noble Spanish Soldier*, then, to be referred back to a play as early as 1592? Few passages in the late play suggest an origin before 1600, though this fact may be due to repeated revision.

C. R. BASKERVILL